A

PARADOX

Against

LIFE.

Written

By the LORDS in the

TOWER.

An Heroick Poem.

Beatus
Ante Obitum Nemo

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PARADOX

LIFE.

By the LORDS in the TOWER.

A Paradox againſt LIFE.

WHen GOD the Mighty Maſs of Matter Made,
As yet, no Light nor Form, the Chaos had.
Darkneſs ſole Monarch was Below, the Maſs
Look't all Confus'd, and with an *Ethiop's* Face.
'Till the Almighty *Fiat* call'd forth Light,
From the Black VVomb of yet Eternal Night.
Light, without which, the VVorld had ne're been ſeen,
Nor good, could e're the Six-Days VVork, have been.
The living Stream was not to Pipes Convey'd,
But in the pure Eternal Fountain, ſtaid.
'Twas near the End of the Creation grown,
Before Life (Now th' Unhappy Thing) was known.
VVhen Good, the Gift Firſt to the Fiſh, was given,
For the Great *Whale*, was the firſt-Born of Heaven.
Man though the Firſt, in Order, was the Laſt,
That from his Maker, did this Bounty Taſt.
Too Sweet alas, to be a Long Repaſt!
His Short-liv'd Glory, but fore-run his Shame,
And *Paradiſe* did ſeem a Vaniſh'd Dream.

How ſhort a time, Poor Wretch! thy Bliſs did laſt,
Thy Brighter Morn, was in its Riſe Ore-caſt.
O Fatal Ill! Which Mankind may bemoan,
All *Edens* Fruits were freely Given, ſave One.
But things Unlawful moſt Affected be,
And *Eve* Long'd for the Forbidden Tree.
What Reſtleſs Paſſions Rackt the Doubtful Mind
Who by Free-Will to Eat, were quickly pin'd,
And a Plague, worſe than Famin, left their Kind.
The paſſive Mind, was by Enflam'd Deſire,
To the New Fabrick's ruin, ſet on Fire.
Vain and inſatiat Appetite and Luſt,
Have brought him Back more Low, than to the Duſt.
The World's First-Great-Recorder, does Relate,
Of Wretched Man, the Miſerable State.
Who following Sence, 'gainſt Reaſon did Rebel,
And Traytor-like, from All his Glories Fell.
Whil'ſt in a State of Innocence He ſtood,
No Fear made Beaſts ſeek Shelter in the Wood.
Nor did the Birds, with haſty Wings take Flight;
All Hover'd Round, and Wonder'd at the Sight.
But when He Fell, How Viſible Sin was,
That Birds and Beaſts could Read it in His Face?

With

With various haſt, th' afrighted Croud's Repair,
Some to the Woods, ſome to remoter Ayr,
Thus when a Prince turns Traytor to the Laws,
His Loyal Subjects do decline his Cauſe.
Ah Curiouſneſs! Firſt Cauſe of all Our Ill,
And yet the Plague, which does Infect us ſtill.
Now look no more for Reſt, for Toyl thou muſt,
Till whence Firſt come, thou bee'ſt brought back to Duſt.
The Breath which Bleſt his Heaven-Stampt-Duſt, is now,
That which the Subject makes him of all Woe,
And rowles the troubl'd Bubble too and froe.
What does Man's Life, when moſt Serene afford?
'Tis but a Worm that gnaws the faireſt *Gourd*.
Our Days of Gladneſs are but ſhort Reliefs,
Given to reſerve us for enduring Griefs.
Poor Span of wretched Earth! If meaſur'd by
The tedious Raign of Life's Calamity,
Though thus Contracted, ſtill thou may'ſt Complain,
That yet too much of *Patriarch* does remain.
If in Long Life, there may a Bleſſing be,
'Twas only known in the World's Infancy.
Man then, a *Stag* or *Raven*, could ſurvive,
But we can ſcarce with *Bats* or *Swallows* Live.

We ſpend the Summer of Our Days, as They,
To rear a pile of Dirt, and ſo away.
The Sap of Life now to the Root is ſunk,
And the Hydropick Earth the Juice hath drunk.
If Lifes *Meanders* to the Spring we trace,
It riſes Troubled, and in Storms doth paſs.
Th' impetuous Torrent, ſwelling we ſhall find,
Like Tydes born up, by a ſtrong Weſtern Wind,
Mouldring the Bancks, in which it is Confin'd.
It dwells in Blood, and is the Tyde of Fate,
And does in Cares and Sorrows Circulate.
In ſecret Channels, through the groſſer Maſs,
That Small-Red-Sea, purſuing Life doth paſs.
But no where Reſts, no Place affordeth Eaſe,
To this poor Mans uncurable Diſeaſe;
A breath ſoon gone, made up of Sighs and Groans,
Th' unhappy Ligament of Fleſh and Bones.
From dull Privation, and lean Emptineſs,
A Quinteſcence deriv'd from Nothingneſs.
The falſe and gaudy Colours of the Bowe,
May boaſt as much reallity, as Thou:
Iris may be thy Rival in each part,
Who but the Dream of a faint Shadow art.

Sun

Sun, Water, Earth, the Elements in One,
Doe Club alike, for your Production.
Both, as the Smoak do vaniſh, and Our Breath,
Serves only to bear up the Wings of Death.
A buſy noiſy thing, that do'ſt Expreſs,
But hollow joy, and real Emptineſs.
Almoſt each Circumſtance of Life declares,
How flat Man's Joyes are, and how ſharp his Cares.
A Glowe-worms fainter Light, that ſhines in vain,
Extinguiſht by the leaſt of *Cynthias* Train.
Iſthmu's of Earth! That do'ſt ſo proudly riſe,
And thruſt thy ſelf, 'twixt two Eternities.
That do'ſt in pain, the ſhock of time, ſuſtain,
And waſht away, art ſwallow'd in the Main.
This vaſt Triangle, this moſt Huge ſmall thing
Which all the World within it ſelf can bring,
Lifes quaking Center, ſtill firſt Quick, laſt Kill'd,
Like to ſome vaſt *Abyſſe* can ne're be fill'd.
It ſtill is pin'd, and does complain for Reſt,
By its continual beating in our Breaſt.
Myſterious Riddle, which the Grave does Read,
We can't be truly ſaid to Live, 'till Dead!
We to a Forraign Country Natives are,
And muſt by Pain and Travel, enter there,

'Till once Arriv'd, where we ſhould dayly tend,
Cares painful Progreſs, cannot have an End.
Our being from Above, does let us Know,
We're in Antipathy to things below.
And all our Ayery Joyes do Anguiſh bring;
They want the Honey, but retain the Sting.
Yet hug Our ſelves, in hopes that Life will grant,
Some good, of which we ſtill are Ignorant.
This Leſſer World, in which we ſo much Truſt,
What is it, but a Wind inclos'd in Duſt?
A VVorld in which, VVar never yet did Ceaſe,
For ſtill Inteſtine Foes diſturb its Peace.
Unkinder Nature to a State of VVar,
Deſigns us, though we moſt Defenceleſs are.
Man's Life's a Warfare, and we're preſt upon
A moſt unequal Combat, Three to One.
But the brave Victor reaps a Glorious Crown.
The wretched Creature Man's no ſooner Born,
But with Good-Morrows, we Salute his Morn.
Though in a rugged and a narrow way,
The Pilgrim's bound to Travel out his Day.
But to his Inn, when he does Safe Arrive,
Although his Night of Reſt be come, VVe Grieve.

VVith

VVith Joy we ſee him Launch into the Storm,
But when he reaches the Calm Port, we Mourn.
What a Prepoſtr'ous Kindneſs do we ſhow,
Paying Our Joy to th' Object of all Woe?
By the Reverſe, the *Spartans* do Expreſs
Their Joy and Sorrow in an Apter Dreſs.
Man at his Birth, inſtructs us for to Cry,
Complaining ſtrait of Life's great Injury,
And does Himſelf Weep his own *Obſequie*.
His Births Portentous, and He **falls upon,**
An Ominous Precipitation.
The Lumpe of Earth is Kneaded up of Ill,
Swelling and Fainting, though he goes Down-Hill.
What are thoſe Joyes, that He can call his own,
That make the bitter Draught of Life, go down?
Life's the great Hinge, on which uneaſie Man,
Does turn in Paine and never quiet Hang.
Life, which from Worldly Care, Contracts each Day,
A Ruſt, which Eates our Poliſh't joyes away.
Life is a ſtrange and Fatal Energy,
Which does imploy Our Sence in Miſery.
It winds the Curious *Clock-Work* up, and ſtrait,
To make it go, hangs on a Heavy Wait.

The Chryſtal Spheres, the Lanthorns of Our Sight,
(Whether by drawing or diſperſing Light)
The gen'ral Spies, that ev'ry thing do mark,
Of all the Leſſer World the brighteſt Spark;
Which ſtraight, when clos'd, does make the Great ſeem Dark:
Did of Chief Pleaſures, once the Center prove,
Both from the World Below, and that Above.
Suns of the Senſes, Mirrors of the Mind,
Twin-Orbs of Light, which once ſo Brightly ſhin'd,
The Windowes of the Man, 'till Sight doth fail,
Clear as the Chryſtals, and as Chryſtals frail;
Being perverted from their Uſe, at firſt,
Are turn'd to Stars of Pride, and Flames of Luſt.
By Theſe, as Doors, all Miſchiefs enter in,
The Baits, the Panders and the Gates of Sin.
Theſe Living Lab'rynths, entertaining Sounds,
Which bring the Stuff, on which the Judgment Grounds.
As ready Porters at Attendance ſit,
And whatſoever ſtrikes, do ſtraight Admit.
Theſe oft' with Pleaſure, ſmooth Afflicting Care,
VVhil'ſt ſome Harmonious Sound does Charm the Ayr.
Yet like ſome Strumpet that's grown Diſſolute,
Are to the moſt Obſcene, a Proſtitute.

VVhil'ſt

VVhil'ſt ſtrong Deſires, faint Goodneſs do Controul,
And *Circes*-like, pour Poiſon in the Soul.
By the ſtrange Charms of a Seducing Tongue,
Are Tempted, and Corrupted, unto Wrong.
Sin makes Attaques ſtill on the Weaker Parts,
And by our Eyes and Ears, does Storm our Hearts.
Theſe are the *Mines*, which firſt blow up the Mind,
To Luſt, Ambition, Sins of ev'ry kind,
Which all our Strength by Treaty do betray,
'Gainſt Senſe and Reaſons Charge, a Guard-leſs way.
I'th' Ear and Eye, Satan in Ambuſh lay.
Theſe Potent-Entries, can hold nothing out,
But give each Minute grounds for Fear or Doubt.
Impregnable had this Frail-Fort of Duſt
Been againſt all the Batteries of Luſt,
Had not his Senſes wrought his overthrow,
By holding Correſpondence with the Foe.
Beſiegers quickly may the Caſtle Win,
If they Corrupt the Sentinels Within.
Unhappy Man! VVhoſe Lifes ſublimeſt Bliſs,
In the Enjoyment but his Ruin is!
Yet Spaniel-natur'd, though he's Beaten ſo,
The Rod he Kiſſes, and in Love does grow,
With the Inchanting *Syrens* of his VVo.

Go ask the Tortur'd VVretch upon the Rack,
VVhen his ſtrong Joynts and Nerv's, with Anguiſh Crack;
How 'tis he Knows he ſuffers ſo much Pain?
He'l Cry, He Feels it, and of Life complain.
Life is by her own Cruelty undone;
For Sence no longer Feels, than Life layes on.
She Chains the Slave toth' *Gallie*, bids him Row,
VVhich he muſt do, 'cauſe Life will have it ſo.
Let us no more againſt the *Turks* Exclaim,
This prouder *Sultan* muſt endure the Blame.
She puts us to a Vaſt Expence, we pay
All that we Have, Each Moment, for her Stay.
And muſt at Ev'ry Turn, be waited on;
For if Neglected, the ſhye *Gueſt* is gone.

BEHOLD the greateſt Man of all the *Eaſt*,
VVho was (if Riches make Man ſo) moſt Bleſt!
The Dying *Swan* in a Melodious Strain,
For all His Patience, does of Life complain.
His Comforters were ſuch, they brought far more
Sorrow, than all his Meſſengers before.
From Death alone He does expect His Cure;
Death, that's the laſt of Remedies, and Sure.
Death whoſe Officious Hand, Binds up the Sore,
VVhich with a Pot-ſherd he had Prob'd before.

VVith

The Friendly Porter, who Unlocks the Gate,
And bids the *Lazer* now, no longer Wait.
Death that does Wing him, for's Eternal Home,
And bids him Flie, quick as his Thoughts have done.
Both by the Separation now will Gain,
One, Bliſs; the Other, Freedom from All Pain.
Then the Souls Knowledge, which before alone,
Was at the beſt but Speculation.
Will be reduced to a Certaintie,
What now She Knows by Hear-ſay, then She'l See.
As Travellers beſt Know, if Fame ſpeak True,
When they in Forrein Lands the Wonder View.
She recollects Her Faculties, Diffus'd
Amid'ſt Frail Fleſh, no more to be Abus'd.
Then parts in Tryumph, freed from Earthly Toyles,
Yet Stayes to'th' laſt, to gather up Her Spoyles.
VVHY are We holden in this ſad Suſpence?
Death's the great'ſt Bleſſing, that You can Diſpence.
The Cruel Catt thus Dallies with her Prey,
Sporting awhile with what ſhe makes Away.
Make haſt, leſt Nature ſhould Anticipate,
The Glorious Work that is deſign'd for Fate.
We, like to *Codrus*, would ev'n Death Embrace,
If for Our Country's Good, and Publick Peace.

To th' Innocent, to Dye's an Eaſy Thing,
Death does i'th' dread'ſt Accoſt, no Terror bring.
An Ax no more our Spirits can Command,
Than can a *Phleghm* in the Phyſitians Hand.
Death in its ſelf, is but a Harmleſs Thing,
'Tis Apprehention Contributes the Sting.
And ſince a Debt to Nature we do own,
Better on Scaffolds paid, than Beds of Down.
Thoſe Lords of Fortune, ſweeten ev'ry State,
Who can Command Themſelves, though not their Fate.
Thy Rod, Affliction, is to us moſt Dear,
VVho lays it on, will give us Strength to bear.
The ſtorms of Fate, we bravely can defie,
Whilſt on the Rock of Ages we rely.
And miſſing but the falſe World's Glories, do,
Miſs all the Ills which do Attend it, Too.
Here, from Court-Ryots, we ſecured are;
From Cheats of Marts, and Clamors of the Bar:
And from the Pulpit; A Worſe Miſchief far!
VVhat great Perfections can thoſe Parſons Reach,
VVho far from Practice, only ſtrive to Preach?
VVho Learn their Science, as an Art to Gain;
And wanting Salt, would Seaſon Souls in Vain.

VVho

Who to Buy Earth, do Sell out ſhares of Heaven,
And drive a Trade, with what is freely Given.
Vile Avarice, and Pride! From Heaven Accurſt,
In all Men Bad, but in a Church-Man Worſt!
That King, who was for Wiſdom moſt Approv'd,
Whoſe Mind and Fortune in like Meaſure mov'd.
Reacht to thoſe Heights of Bliſs, that Earth could Breed,
Whil'ſt Wealth and Honour ſtriv'd, which ſhould Exceed.
Even He was Croſt Alive, and Scorn'd when Dead,
By Lifes great Happineſs, unhappy Made.
Of Senceleſs Honour, we Renounce the Care,
The Firſt Man he was Made, the reſt Born Bare.
Theſe Floating Treaſures come and go with Breath,
And nothing have to give ſo good as Death.
Honour and Wealth, Ambitions Twins, with Pains
Are bred, which Man with Tort'ring Care, Maintains.
Only the Prickles in Poſſeſſion ſtay,
When theſe Gay Roſes Fade and Fall away.
We can without a Paradox, Believe,
Though ſtill Confin'd, we do in Freedom Live.
And when the Audit of our Days is come,
And all our Items in one Total Sum,
The Chearfulneſs with which, to Death wee'l go,
A Dying Proof ſhall of this Poem ſhow.

FINIS.